PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Certainly, I will look into this because this has been raised now. I will go into it and keep you informed.

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE: Will the appellate authority sit in judgment over the injustice you have been doing to us, to the Vidarbha region?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Any citizen can approach the Authority and the Authority's decisions will be final because that Authority will make my Ministry transparent. I have accepted that with all humility and all sense of responsibility. The concern for all kinds of conservation that is inthe interest of our nation, will be answered. If you kindly take up this matter with me, I would love to get back to you with full details. I join you on the issue over which you have shown concern.

डा० कर्ण सिंह: महोदया, हमारी संस्कृति में गंगा सबसे पवित्र और स्वच्छ नदी मानी जाती थी और अब भी मानी जाती है लेकिन गंगा मे बड़ा भयंकर प्रदूषण हो रहा है। कई वर्ष पहले श्री राजीव गांधी के समय में गंगा को स्वच्छ करने का प्लान बनाया गया था और करोड़ों रुपए इसके लिए रखे गये थे लेकिन मेरी जारीकारी के अनुसार उससे कोई अंतर नहीं पड़ा है और गंगा में प्रदूषण अभी तक वैसे का वैसा चल रहा है। तो क्या मंत्री महोदय इस संबंध में हमें कोई आश्वासन देंगे कि गंगा के प्रदूषण की ओर विशेष ध्यान दिया जाएगा?

प्रो० सैफउद्दीन सोज: वैसे तो हमारे यहां बहुत सारे दरिया हैं और सभी दरिया पवित्र कहलाए जा सकते हैं लेकिन गंगा की अहमियत सारे देश के लिए है और हमारी तहज़ीब को गंगा-जमुनी तहज़ीब कहा जाता है। मैंने अपना कार्यभार संभालते ही सबसे पहले गंगा की तरफ तवज्जह दी है। उस ज़माने में इस पर बड़ी चर्चा हो रही थी और मुझे बताते हुए खुशी है कि नेशनल कंजरवेशन बोर्ड में गंगा पहला विषय था और उसमे अब तक लगभग 500 करोड़ रुपए का खर्च हुआ है, वह खर्चा हम जाया नहीं होने देंगे और गंगा के बारे में हम विशेष प्रोग्राम चलाएंगे।

बल्कि यू०पी०, बिहार, वेस्ट बंगाल और हरियाणा ने यह कहा कि शेयरिंग मत मांगिए हमको हंड्रेड परसेंट दे दीजिए। I went to the Planning Commission; I went to hon. Prime Minister. Under hon. Prime Minister's chairmanship we held a meeting of the National River Conservation Authority and we decided to give States a hundred per cent funding. But we have requested them, and I am repeating my request, that they must give a helping hand to make the Ganga project a success.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Thank you, Mr. Minister, the Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Issuance of metal passes to the Members of the Railway Board

*42. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any system of issuing metal passes to Members of the Railway Board or others is in vogue in the Indian Railways;

(b) whether it is a fact that 6000 such passes have been issued during the year 1996-97;

(c) what is the difference between metal and other free passes;

(d) since when the system is in existence in the Railways and the Criteria fixed for issuing such passes;

(e) whether such passes are also issued to the families of the Railway Board Members;

(f) if so, on what terms and conditions and justifications therefore; and

(g) whether these passes remain valid even after their retirement?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Metal Passes are duty passes and they are issued to Railway officers for performing journey on duty.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Metal Passes are issued to railway officers for journeys on official duty. Other passes are issued for journeys on official duty/privilege/post retirement complimentary account.

(d) The system is in vogue since long. Metal Passes of different kinds are issued to Railway officers, depending on their grade and status.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) No, Sir.

Removal of Encroachment on Railway Land

*43. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken by the Railways for the removal of unauthorised encroachment on Railway land throughout the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Indian Railways have identified the total areas of about 2457 hectares of railway land under encroachment or occupied by unauthorised persons in the country;

(c) if so, the zone-wise details thereof particularly in Gujarat; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (d) Removal of encroachments on Railway land is a continuous process. Regular inspections are done by the Railway Officials to prevent fresh encroachments, and these are removed as soon as they are noticed. Regarding old encroachments, action is taken to remove them under Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

To prevent encroachments on Railway land, construction of boundary wall and fencing in the vulnerable sections are undertaken. Planting of suitable trees/ shrubs including quick growing thorny trees is also done.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Information about area of railway land under encroachment is not maintained State-wise but Zonewise as Railway Zones span over more than one State. The details are as follows:—

Railway	Area of Railway land under encroachment (in hect.)
CR	64
ER	85
NR	900
NER	115
NFR	304
SR	83
SCR	84
SER	715
WR	107
	2457

Schemes and Laws Relating to Women

*44. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the action taken to popularise laws relating to women development schemes for rural women, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana etc.; and

(b) the implementing agencies of the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) The Government of India has brought out a series of Legal Literacy Manuals in English and Hindi in simple and illustrative language to educate women about their basic rights. These have been translated into 14 regional languages and also been made into video films for better dissemination. Under the scheme of Education Work for prevention of Atrocities on Women, assistance is given to voluntary organisations, women's studies centres